A Protestant Antidote AGAINST POPERY:

With

A Brief Discourse OF The great Atheisticalness and vain Amours Now in Fashion.

Written in a LETTER to a Young Lady, By a Person of Honour.

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MADAM,

I Know the law of Custom has made it not only an usual favour, but an expected duty, to complement at least, if not flatter, such Women as men write to, especially the Great Ladies, who think none write well, that do not *praise them much*; and those write best, who *extol* them most: high Praises being like good Poetry, Musick in words, the sound of which may be agreeable, but truely to deserve them, requires such

a Gygantick ſize of merit, as is very unproportionable to the ſlender-waſted Vertues of moſt Ladies, who are over-eager to *receive* Praiſes, and over-careleſs in *meriting* any: and the grand reaſon is, becauſe they know they uſually have them without it; and that *Cuſtome* muſt give it, though *Reaſon* cannot. So obliging is the common courteſie of *England* to Ladies; that it allows them to pretend to all praiſes as their *due*, though few deſerve any as their *right*. In a word, our *Engliſh* Ladies muſt have their *Characters* writ, juſt as the *Dutch* Madams will have their Pictures drawn, that is, very handſome, though they themſelves be never ſo ugly.

But,

But, *Madam*, for your part, I know your perfections ſo abundantly, and my own heart ſo truly, as I muſt beg the Law of *Cuſtom* pardon here; it being beyond my power to flatter or complement, ſince I can neither over-praiſe your high merit, or outſpeak the real love, and true eſteem; I have both for you and them; ſo that knowing all manner of praiſes to be juſtly due to your merits, I finde I cannot here make you a preſent of any, without doing you an injury, by entitling you to thoſe praiſes by *gift*, which all know are your own by *right*.

For truly, *Madam*, the whole progreſs of your actions have ſtill been ſo highly vertuous,

and religiously strict, and ever believed and proclaimed such, that though your *Beauty* might make bad men *wish* you ill, yet your *Vertues* hinder the worst from daring to *think* you so: for if they did, their own hearts must at the same time condemn their own thoughts, and declare your innocencie; like *Pilate*, who with the same breath he condemned our Saviour, said, *He found no fault in him.*

But, *Madam*, though your vertuous life is so transparently excellent, yet for all that, you ought to look on your unsoil'd Reputation as no small blessing of preservation in these scandalous times, where so few handsome Ladies escape censure,

ſure, and ſo many deſerve it: for now the extravagancies of *Romance-Amours* are not onely daily *read*, but almoſt hourly *practiſed*; and *Women act* more than *Romances can write*; whilſt the ſober Rules of *Vertue*, and pious Duties of *Religion*, are ſeldom thought-on, and moſt rarely practiſed; our Youth being generally grown ſuch fond friends of Mr. *Hobbes* his Books, as they are become meer *ſtrangers* to our Saviour's *Goſpel*; they living as if they were *all bodies*, and had *no ſouls*, or had them but to *loſe*, turning *Religion* into *Raillery*, and *Goſpel* into *Romances*: for thus in ſhort they mangle Scripture, that part which is chiefly *Hiſtorical*, that is their

meer *Goſpel*-part; and that which is the *Goſpel*-part, is their meer *Hiſtorical* part; and becauſe they cannot *bring the Goſpel* to prove their *Atheiſtical reaſons*, pretend to prove by *Reaſon*, that there is *no Goſpel*: and if ſome of them now and then look over a Chapter, they onely *paſs through* it, as a *Spie* doth in *Enemies Country*, with a *miſchievous deſigne*; and if they can but finde in Scripture a *ſeeming Contradiction*, that they preſently bring on the Stage, as they do *Fools* in *Plays*, to *railly* with, and make *ſport* at: ſo great a *Jeſt* our *Young Sparks* now make of their *Salvation*, as to be *pleas'd* in the meer *diſpleaſing* God; without conſidering, 'tis not onely

onely *Atheistical madness*, but *Deviliſh folly*, to make that their *Jeſt*, which they may be *damn'd-for in earneſt*.

Thus our Youth throw away their *Souls*; and for their *Time*, they care not how they ſpend it, (always provided it be not religiouſly) and therefore they waſte it moſt in the company of *vain Women*; and are ſo eager and zealous in their *purſuit*, and ſo conſtant in their *ſervice*, as if they fancied God was *miſtaken*, and intended creating *man for the woman*, rather than *the woman for the man*. But though all know God made the *Woman for the Man*, yet what Critick can tell us whether our *New Mode* has made the *Gallant for the Miſtreſs*, or the *Miſtreſs for*

the Gallant? But of this we are all ſure, They are ſo plentifully made for *one another*, that the Eaſtern Country-Laws allow not with more freedome *plurality of Wives*; than our new Engliſh Cuſtomes admit *plurality of Miſtreſſes*. Nay, I may yet venture to ſay more, That the *Liberty* of our men *exceeds* theirs: for they are permitted no more Wives than they can well *keep*, but ours are allowed as many Miſtreſſes as they can any way *get*.

For indeed, the Names of *Tom and Beſs* are hardly more familiar here, than thoſe of *Gallant* and *Miſtreſs*; and are ſo far from being eſteemed Names of *diſcredit*, that many of our Mode-Ladies look on their

Gallants as *Beauty-marks*, rather than *ſtains* of Reputation. And for all they cannot but know, that the *infection* of *Gallants* is as bad an enemy to *Credit*, as the *Small-pox* to *Beauty*, a common *ruiner* of it: And though Womens *Gallants* are in plain *Engliſh* no better than the publick *Executioners* of their reputations; and indeed no women will allow them, but ſuch as are *willingly condemn'd* to ſuffer (and women that ſlight reputation are ſeldom fond of Chaſtitie) Yet theſe *abuſers* of *love*, and *murderers* of *fame*, by their *fair words* and *baſe Arts*, have ſo inſinuated themſelves into their favours, as the women now, forſooth, call their *Gallants* their

their *Friends*; and if comon report may be credited, they are indeed their *boſom-ones*; (and ſuch women as value little what *others ſay*, ſeldome care much what they *themſelves do*:) Cuſtome having brought many of our women to that paſs, as they now glory in the *number* of their *Gallants*, eſteeming them rather ſo many *Vouchers* of their *Beautie*, than ſo many *Robbers* of their *Honour*; the ſo uſual practice of this ſcandal, having taken away womens *ſenſe*, that like blackneſs amongſt the *Æthiopians*, its *Commonneſs* has removed its *deformity*: And there is now ſuch a forward *Love-ſpring* in the Nurſeries of our Young Ladies, as the very

little

little-ones learn to ſpell *Amour* with their *Feſcue*, and will pretend to *entertain* their *Young Gallants*, in the dark walks of *Love*, and in the Labyrinth of its *Intrigues*, before they well know what the thing *Love* is, or the name of *Gallant* means; and would have *Servants* come to them, before they come to the *Teens*, (the *ripeneſs* of their *minds* outrunning that of their *bodies*) and fancy men ſo mad as to believe, 'tis *expectation* makes a Bleſſing *dear*. But that dull *Presbyterian way* of *Love*, is now quite out of Faſhion, and the loves of our *Young Gallants* are grown as *fickle*, and meer *skin-deep*, as their Miſtreſſes *Fanſies* and *Beauties*; and *Love-verſes* that are but *skin-*

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skin-deep, can never hurt the *heart*; and therefore though every day we hear of Hundreds of Gallants that are *dying for love* in their Miſtreſſes company, yet we cannot read of one theſe many Ages that *dyed for love* in the Weekly Bills of Mortality; the *obliging carriage* of the Ladies of the times having made our Young men ſo *healthfully wiſe*, ſo *forwardly bold*, or at leaſt ſo *impatiently haſty*, as they expect now-a-days to take *Young women*, as great Armies do *weak Towns*, onely by *Summons*, or *Aſſaults*; as not eſteeming them worthy the the time and trouble of a *Love-ſiege*, though their Miſtreſſes were as yielding as *Rome* it ſelf, which Writers ſay, was *never* be-

besieged without being taken: that is, in short, they hold Handsome women worth *enjoying*, but not *wooing*. And that makes our Young men so eager and inconstant in their *Amours*, as really 'tis a very hard measuring-cast to tell, whether our Young Gallants use now more art, or speed, in the *getting* or *forgetting* of their Mistresses.

But the best of it is, that the *inconstancy* of *both Sexes* are now so equally match'd, that I cannot write more of their *Gallants* inconstancies, than their *Mistresses* make good of their own: for they deal with their *Gallants*, as their *Fashions*; that which comes *latest*, is still *like'd best*, and *us'd most*. In a word,

word, the conſtancy and inconſtancy of our Young men and women, are juſt like *water* and *ice*, where one ſtill *makes* the other; and their *loves* (ice-like) never *laſt long*; and as ſoon as 'tis *diſſolv'd*, turns immediately *to the ſame* it was before, without any alteration or prejudice: Nor can *water* be more apt and ready by the coming of *Froſt* to turn to *Ice*, than our Young men and womens hearts are apt and enclin'd to *return to love*, at the approach of *freſh-fancied Beauty*. And truly the inconſtancy of our Young men cannot be *ſo great*, nor their inclinations *ſo ill*, but the tongues of many of our Young women are grown *as bad*: for now if a

Young

Young maid be but cry'd up for *handſom*, and reſolves to continue *vertuous*, and therefore will not turn *vain*, and deſerve cenſure, as much as the reſt, they will be ſure to ſpeak her as *bad* as the *worſt*; and if they cannot with Juſtice wound her *vertue*, they will attempt by ill Arts to murder her *reputation*, (*envy* being the parent of *wicked invention*) it being now a *Mode-principle* amongſt moſt of our handſom women, that no woman that enjoyes a large proportion of *Beauty*, but muſt as an unavoidable appurtenance, carry with it a load of ſcandalous *cenſures* (a falſe Character of *ſome*, though too true a one of *moſt*) which occaſions their not caring how-

un-

unjuſtly they increaſe anothers *burthen*, in hope to leſſen their own *load*; and by *overſtretching* the miſcarriages of others greater than they ſhould be, hope to *ſhrink* theirs leſs than really they are; vainly fancying, that *ſpattering* with dirt and reproach other womens reputations, were a kind of *wiping clean* their own; which ſuits not at all with the mild and moderate rules of *Vertue*, which onely allows women to correct each others faults, by their *good Examples*, but not to increaſe them by their *bad cenſures*. For, ſcandalous *cenſures*, like *Muſhooms*, grow *without any root*; ſo tender and mutable a thing is a handſom womans good Name: there's

there's no taking its *true Elevation* by any certain *outward Rules* and meaſures, ſince it depends more on her Neighbours good or bad report, than on her own vertuous or ill actions; and more on what *they ſay*, than what *ſhe does*. And really ſuch reports are uſually ſo ſophiſticated with *ſelf-concerns*, and ſo ſtrongly byaſs'd by *averſion* or *inclination*, as you may daily hear in common Diſcourſe, both men and women turn *Vertue into Vice*, and *Vice into Vertue*; and ſo characterize *Good* women to be *bad*, and *bad* women to be *good*; ſpeaking not as women *deſerve*, but as they *fancy*; and therefore it often happens, that many women *ſave their reputations*, even

even by a ſpeedy *loſing their chaſtity*, whilſt other women *loſe their reputation* in their very *defence of it*; that is, in ſhort, more women loſe their *reputation* in admitting to be *much courted* (though that be all) than by being *ill injoyn'd*: and the reaſon is plain, Becauſe the *Courtſhip* is *publick* to all, but the *injoyment* is onely *private* to themſelves; and 'tis more rational two *concerned perſons* ſhould keep their own counſel, than many *unconcern'd* ſhould keep it for them; ſo that it cannot neceſſarily follow, that the *reported reputation* or diſreputation of handſom women muſt needs be the *true iſſue* of their merits, but often the *by-blow* of *chance*;

and

and therefore *common report* can be no *right rule* to meaſure womens *reputations* by: for many reports have much of the *Devils nature* in them, who is *a liar from the beginning.* And indeed, if we but truly conſider, we ſhall find women generally cenſure *one another*, not as they are *really* faulty, but as they *appear*, and are *eſteemed* handſom; and therefore *ugly women* have the priviledge of *Popes*, who *cannot erre*, but may do *what they will*, and take what *liberty* they pleaſe; and *handſom women* will be as far from cenſuring their *actions*, as *Young men* from praiſing their *perſons:* ſo that really in effect, we find moſt womens *cenſures* are not proportionable

to

to the *ill* others act, but rather ſuitable to the *Beauty* they poſſeſs; which by their leave is a way of *judging*, that's both *irrational* and *uncharitable*; ſince I am ſure none can *deny*, but that there are ſome *unhandſome women unchaſt*; and ſome *chaſt women handſom*: for *Vertue* and *Beauty* are not ſo declar'd enemies, but they ſometimes meet; though I cannot deny, but that *Vertue*, which in former Ages was eſteemed one of the greateſt *adornments* of the *ſoul*, is now ſo *Eclipſed* by the outward *Beauty* of the body, as *Vertue* and *Piety* (the true *inward Beauty*) cannot ſhine out: a *good ſoul* being nothing now in compariſon of a *good face*;

Beauty being now the *Great Empreſs* that commands the whole World, and makes the Supremeſt of men to become ſubjects to her. And yet this ſo *ador'd Beauty*, (which all women are ſo *ambitious of*, and all men ſo *court*) has at beſt no *intrinſick* value in it, but juſt like *riches*, they *enjoy moſt*, that are *contended with leaſt*; ſince 'tis not *much*, but *enough*, that's the *true meaſure* of ſatisfaction. But *Madam*, 'tis now more than time to beg your pardon; for I find I am ſtray'd both beyond the *time*, and beſide the *road* of my deſigne'd Diſcourſe, which is not to preſent you a *Character*, or *Liſt* of the *fine Ladies*, and *Mode-vices* of the times; they will

will require a much *wittier Pen* than I pretend to be Master of, and a *larger Volume* than I design to trouble you with: but this *Character* which indeed merits *Volumes of praises*, I am sure I can give you, without needing *wit*, or abusing of *time*; and if I could here cast up the sum total of all the *vices* that *your Sex* are either *guilty of*, or *scandaliz'd with* (which I'le assure you are *more than a few*) their number might be *tedious to read*, but need not be *disagreeable for you to hear*, since by naming all those faults they are *infected with*, I should but tell all those you are *free from*.

But, *Madam*, my design is now to remove my Battery, and

and change my Scene of Writing, as you have your place of Living; and to level my Discourse, not at the vices and pleasures of *London*, nor the pastimes of the Court, but at your Country-Neighbours, the Woods and Mountains of *Macroome*, which renders it a place much fitter to exercise your patience, than satisfie your delight, were you of the humor of most Ladies; but all know you are not onely an Excellent women, but an Extraordinary Wife, I mean in Goodness, (for 'tis rare now to meet a wife that's not extraordinary) for you take as much satisfaction in the cares of well managing and improving your Estate, as most other Ladies delight, in the lavishing

theirs; ſo that I can truly ſay, you have not onely brought your Lord a large ſum of money for your Portion, but a continued increaſe of Rent by your Induſtry.

And I am ſure, *Madam*, if you were now aſk't as the Philoſopher was, Where was his home? you would anſwer now, as he did then, My home is ſtill where my chief buſineſs is. So that now your chief concerns and Family, (which is ſtill the good Wives Treaſure) being at *Macroome*, I muſt conclude your heart is there alſo.

A place, where in lieu of *London*, crowds of good Company, and ſwarms of divertiſements, you muſt prepare to meet

meet with, and do Penance to your ſelf, *among the Flocks of Prieſts and Fryers, againſt whoſe Popiſh inſinuations, and infectious perſwaſions*, I here preſent you a ſmall, but neceſſary Collection of Arguments to carry about you, as a Preſervative in your own Religion, and an Antidote againſt theirs; and though I cannot pretend this pocket-Piſtol is a ſufficient Battering-piece, to beat down their infallible Church, yet I doubt not but it will at leaſt be a ſufficient Life-guard to defend you and your Chamber againſt their aſſaults.

They are moſt of them argumentative reaſonings I pickt out of Mr. *Chillingworth*, as one that reaſons beſt, and ſatiſ-

fies me moſt, of any I ever read; and knowing you want a Collection of choice flowers, I heartily wiſh that theſe I have gathered out of his Garden, and here ſorted and made up to preſent you in a Noſegay, may ſerve you againſt the unpleaſing ſavour of Popiſh Doctrine: and I wiſh they may not altogether degenerate from the common nature of flowers, which the Naturaliſt tells us, grow larger and better by being tranſplanted; ſo that I hope you will not find them the worſe, nor like them the leſs, for being tranſplanted, but receive theſe Arguments juſt as you do your Rents, without caring whether your Tenants have the Money out of their own

own bags, or borrow it, ſo you have it to ſupply your occaſions.

Truly, *Madam*, I have taken ſome pains, and ſpent much time in reading the Diſcourſes of the Papiſts againſt our Religion; and though I have conſider'd their Arguments without the leaſt Byas, or antedated prejudice; yet I can give no better a Character of them, than I do of ill Dealers, The more I have to do with them, the worſe I like them: they ſavor much of ſelf-intereſt, teaching Church-Government, before Goſpel-Obedience; witneſs their holding Marriage a greater crime in a Prieſt, than Fornication: the one is but forbid by their Churches Law, which they all

know is disputable, the later by the Law of Christ, which they cannot but know, ought to be past all dispute.

And truly, *Madam*, if you please to admit *your reason* to make but a short progress *into the Popish Religion*, you shall find much to create *your wonder*, but little to *satisfie your reason or belief*; for the Gospel of Christ is the Gospel of Truth, and therefore ought still to be pictur'd naked as Truth, with out any Art of *Roman* Dresses, which are onely obscure shadings of the true light of Scripture, by making dark Paraphrases on the plainest Gospel-Commands, which in all reason ought to be plain enough for the meanest capacity: for

for God forbid it ſhould be otherwiſe; for the meaneſt Chriſtian muſt be ſaved or damned, for keeping or not keeping them; and ſure God's Juſtice will never ſend perſons to Hell, for not doing what they could not underſtand was his Will they ſhould do; that were ſuch a cruelty, as if a man ſhould torment his ſervant for not doing his Errant, when he knew he did not underſtand his Meſſage; yet the Papiſt muſt not take theſe plain Goſpel-Commands as ſuch, but as they are diſtill'd in the myſterious politick Lymbeck of the Popiſh intereſt: indeed Myſtery and Obedience is ſo interwoven in that Religion, that Papiſts muſt take what their Prieſt

tells them, as men do wives, for better, for worse, & must marry their Faith to their Churches infallibility, which allows that onely to be Gospel, which their Church sayes shall be, not what the Apostles write is so; for the Papists must obey the Pope, though no where commanded in the Gospel; but must not read the Gospel, though they are commanded there to do it.

Nay, when once the Papist can but touch the small Needle of anyones reason with the great Loadstone of the Harmonious Doctrine of a necessary Obedience to their infallible Church, then they make such follow it, to every point of the Compass, be it good, bad, or indifferent; and so they sail all their life,

in

in a Trade-wind of ignorance and ſuperſtition, and muſt believe their Prieſts words before their own ſences, in the plaineſt objects of them; as in the Miracle of Tranſubſtantiation; where you muſt have eyes and ſee not, hands and feel not, but muſt believe in a moment real Bread and Wine to be turned into perfect Fleſh and Blood, though you cannot ſee the leaſt change whatſoever: yet they are bound to believe their Prieſt, before their eyes, ſmell, taſte; nor dare their Prieſt ſay, that the conſecrated Bread (which they eſteem the real Body of Chriſt) will be leſs mouldy, or more uncertain of corruption after Conſecration than before; & the jeaſt of it is,

that at the ſame time the Papiſts believe that Miracle, they alſo believe this Scripture, *That God will not ſuffer his Holy One to ſee corruption.* And though for theſe and many other reaſons, I cannot believe this Tranſubſtantiation-Miracle; yet I cannot but admire this Miracle that belongs to Tranſubſtantiation, which is, how the Pope can bring ſo many, that have ſenſe and reaſon, to believe it.

But I ſhall paſs by their adoring this Sacrament, their praying to Saints, and a multitude of their ſuperſtitious obſervances never uſed in the primitive Church; and ſhall onely deſire you, *Madam*, to obſerve in general, that the Papiſts follow

follow the Gospel, just as they read *Hebrew*, that's backward; for God plainly commands, that all should search the Scripture. And our Blessed Saviour ordered the Sacrament to be administred in both kinds, 1 *Cor.* 11 *Chap.* 28 *vers.* And St. *Paul* forbids publick prayers in an unknown Language, but that which is most for Edification, 1 *Cor.* 14 *c.* 15, 16 *v.* But these plain positive commands do not hinder the Church of *Rome* from declaring, that unlearned men shall not read and search the Scriptures; but if we believe St. *Paul* before the Pope, we may read in the 17 of the *Acts*, 11 *v.* how he commended the Noble *Bereans* for searching the

the Scriptures; and therefore if ſearching the Scriptures had not been not onely lawful, but a commendable act, certainly St. *Paul* would never have commended them for ſo doing. So that the Popiſh Clergy forbids the reading the Scriptures, under a pretence that their Laity might not truly underſtand them. Next, the Church of *Rome* allows onely their Clergy (except free Princes, for they are excepters of perſons, though God is not) to receive the Communion but in one kind, though our Saviour commands, that all drink of the Cup; and the Papiſts cannot deny, but that the Communion was taken in both kinds in all Chriſtian Churches for above

a Thouſands years after Chriſt.

And laſtly, for the poor vulgar ſort, they ſhall onely hear their publick prayers in an unknown Tongue, *viz. Latine*, which a Tenth part of them do not underſtand; and therefore how that can be moſt for Edification, let the Papiſts tell if they can; I am ſure we cannot, nor do we believe they can, without the help of another Tranſubſtantiation-Miracle, and making an unknown Language to moſt to be chang'd at the ſame time into a common known Language to all.

And now, *Madam*, I ſhall humbly deſire you to conſider in general, that though the Papiſts do out-noiſe us (as ſhallow rivers do ſtill the deepeſt)

with

with the high and mighty Rodomontades of their Churches infallibility; yet such high Rants, without true proof, are but like School-boyes paper-Kites, which soar high and lofty, but have nothing else worth taking notice of. They will have the confidence to tell you, that their Popish Church is the *Roman* Catholick, and onely true Christian Church in the whole world: But the Protestants Answer to this their boasting, is, that all the Christian Churches in the whole world (besides the Popish Churches, though more in number than they) declare quite contrary. They will ask you, where your Protestant Church was before *Luther*;

which

which was wittily answered by one; (where the Papists Church never was) in the Bible

The Papists do divert themselves very much at our stiling our King, *Head of the Church*, as we do, for their doing so: for we esteem our King Head onely in his own Dominions, without the Popes title of infallible; and sure 'tis more rational that those of a Kingdom should allow their King to be *Head of the Church* in his own Kingdoms, than that a few Cardinals should make the *Head of the Church* over all Kingdoms. And for all their Jeasting, I am sure we can shew (in sober earnest) Scripture-presidents for Kings being Heads of Churches in their own Dominions

nions, which is more than the Papists can shew for their Pope, or his Churches infallibility; for sure they cannot object against it as new Doctrine (though Doctrine that's new is their greatest Trade) that the Kings of *Judah*, and the first Christian Emperors were Heads of the *Jewish* Churches, and in their own Dominions: And *Solomon* tells us, *That a Divine Sentence is in the lips of the King, and his mouth transgresseth not in Judgement*: (which I am sure Popes have not, witness *Liberius*) and *Solomon* gives the reason, because the Heart of the King is in the Hand of the Lord. If the Papists will pretend so much Scripture for their Pope, I shall onely

onely anſwer, 'Tis more than ever Proteſtants read, or the Apoſtles writ.

The Papiſts will tell you with a great deal of confidence, though we ſay the Bible is the Religion of Proteſtants, yet there is no Proteſtant Religion, or Church, mentioned in the whole Creed, which are the Articles of the Chriſtian Faith: and they will tell you, that their Church is the Catholick Church; and to believe the Catholick Church, was an Article of the Chriſtian Faith from the *very infancy* of the Church in the beginning of the Apoſtles time. Now let the Papiſts tell us, if they bring this as an Argument againſt the Proteſtant Religion in the Bible, or not;

not; if not, what cauſe have they to name it, or what need have we to anſwer it? but if it be one, we make this reply; *That the Roman Church is no more named in the Apoſtles Creed, than the Proteſtant Church is; for the Apoſtles Creed was made before the Roman Church was a Church*; and this I am ſure they cannot deny; ſo that ſince the Catholick Church was then in being, and the *Roman* Church *not* in being, it muſt neceſſarily follow, that the *Roman* Church cannot be the *Catholick* Church mentioned in the *Apoſtles Creed*, and conſequently is not the *Mother-Church*, as the Papiſts would have her to be: thus the Papiſts have ſo overcharg'd this

this Argument to ſhoot at us, as it recoils and flyes in their *own faces.*

And of kin to this, is their grand Battering-piece of all, which ſo thunders in the ears of all Papiſts, and makes the Popes power ſo abſolute, and the poor credulous Papiſt ſo obedient, and that is the power given by our Saviour to St. *Peter*, in the 16*th* of St. *Matthew*, beginning the 18th verſe, *Thou art* Peter, *and on this Rock I will build my Church, and give thee the Keyes of the Kingdom of Heaven; and whomſoever thou ſhalt bind on Earth, ſhall be bound in Heaven; and whomſoever thou ſhalt looſe on Earth, ſhall be looſed is Heaven*; and theſe words the Papiſts under-

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ſtand literally, that St. *Peter's* perſon is the Rock that Chriſt builds his Church on; which cannot poſſibly be, by the *verſes* juſt following: for there when our Saviour tells his Diſciples *of his going to* Jeruſalem, *where he muſt ſuffer many things, and be killed, and raiſed again the Third day*; Peter *took him, and began to rebuke him, Be it far from thee, Lord; this ſhall not be unto thee.* But our Saviour turned, and ſaid unto *Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offence to me, for thou ſavoureſt not the things that be of God, but thoſe that be of men.* By which words 'tis moſt clear and evident, that our Saviour did not mean *Peters* perſon could be the Rock

of

of the Christian Church: for if *Peter's* person had been that Rock meant, sure our Saviour would never have removed it behind him; and it would be not onely irrational, but impious, to believe that Christ would build his Church on Satan, for so he calls St. *Peter's* person; and 'twere as unreasonable to believe that the Rock of Christs Church could be an offence to him, as St. *Peter's* person was; and as improbable again as all this, that Christs Church, the Foundation of all Christianity, should savour, not of the things that be of God, but those that are of men, as *Peter's* person did.

Therefore if you will but please to read the words of

our

our Saviour carefully, you ſhall find they are moſt plain: for *verſe* 13th. *When Jeſus came into the Coaſt of* Cæſarea, *He aſk'd his Diſciples, Whom do men ſay that I am? and they ſaid, Some ſay that thou art* John *the Baptiſt, ſome* Elias, *and others* Jeremias, *or one of the Prophets: but whom ſay ye that I am? and* Simon Peter *anſwered and ſaid, Thou art Chriſt the Son of the Living God: And I ſay alſo unto thee, that thou art* Peter, *and upon this Rock*, (not this perſon) *I will build my Church; that is* (upon this Rock of Faith) *that I am Chriſt the Son of the Living God, I build my Church, and the Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt it.* Now this muſt

must necessarily relate to his faith, not his person; for the gates of Hell, that's the power of evil, did prevail against *Peter's* person, or he had not deny'd and forsworn his Lord and Master again and again; and been afterwards proved blame-worthy by St. *Paul* to his face, and indeed as blame-worthy as any of his Disciples. So that 'tis most plain, that Christs words (of making him the Rock of the Christian Church) related not to his person, but his faith of Christs being the Son of the Living God.

And for the other part; whereas the Papists believe a particular favour and power, given by our Saviour to St. *Peter*;

ter; of the Keys of Heaven; that was given as much to the Eleven Disciples, as to him, as you may read in the 18*th* of St. *Matthew*, and in the 20*th* of St. *John*'s Gospel, and the 23, 24 verses; *As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you: and when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.* So that you see this power is general to the Disciples, and not in particular to St. *Peter*, more than to any of the rest, as the Papists mis-believe.

The Papists have many such Questions, which I am sure,

Madam,

Madam, you have neither the patience to read, nor I the time to write; but thoſe that are moſt material of them, you will find I have here preſented you, truly anſwer'd, by pure Scripture, clear reaſons, plain arguments, and all in few words, fit for the weakeſt memory, or ſmalleſt pocket, to carry about them: for true reaſon doth not conſiſt in large Volumes, long Gowns, or gray Beards; for many live to One and Twenty, without attaining to years of diſcretion; the degrees of Age being not ſtill the meaſures of wiſdom: for the world will never be without old Fools and young Philoſophers.

And truly, *Madam*, for my

part, I cannot ſo much as think of the Papiſts Religion without wonder, that ſo many rational men of them ſhould rather faſten their faith of ſalvation on the pretended infallibility of their Church (which is deny'd by moſt Chriſtians) than on the Holy Scripture, which is granted by all, to be the Will and Word of God, and the very Foundation of their Churches Foundation, as containing in it all things neceſſary to our ſalvation. And we Proteſtants have at leaſt this ſatisfaction and advantage, that not onely the Papiſts, but all ſorts of Chriſtians that are in the circumference of the whole world, meet and joyn with us in this centre of Faith, That the Scriptures con-

contain all things neceſſary to our ſalvation; which being a general granted Truth, I confeſs I admire how any Papiſt can make the leaſt ſcruple, which is the ſafeſt Heavenly Guide, the *Pope*, or the *Goſpel*. If there be any rational man ſo extravagant as to put them in the ſame ballance, and to commit a rape upon his Reaſon, I ſhall onely deſire him to conſider this plain Queſtion: If he were to go a Journey in an unknown way, would he not think it more rational and ſafe to follow a certain true Guide, that all the Chriſtians in the world declare is certainly able and ready to ſhew him the right way, than to follow a pretended Guide, which the greateſt part

of the Chriſtians in the world aſſures him will lead him out of it. And this being the real difference between the Papiſt and Proteſtant in groſs, concerning the Heavenly Guide, the Bible, and the Pope, I think I need now ſay no more, becauſe ſo many have already ſaid ſo much, and I am ſure enough to ſatisfie any, except ſuch, who will believe a crooked Rule is better to draw a ſtraight line by, than a right one.

And now, *Madam*, I ſhall onely beg ſo much of your patience, as to let me tell you, that the plot and Heads of this following diſcourſe, I have Extracted out of the worthy *Chillingworth*. Before I begin the

the diſcourſe it ſelf, I know, in writing a Play, to have Rank'd the plot in the Front of it, and to make the whole deſign of the Prologue to be the Key to uncipher the plot of the Play, (though anciently in uſe) had been now, not onely out of faſhion, but beſide reaſon: For the deſign of Plays aiming chiefly to pleaſe the ſenſes, they ought to be compounded and mixt with hopes and fears, certainties and uncertainties, expectations and delays of the event of the plot; which being all ſo interwoven together, creates the agreeableneſs of the Play; for when once the whole plot is diſcovered, the pleaſure of the Play is ended; like Hare-Hunting, the ſport lies

not in presently taking the Hare, but in following him, in all his Rings and Doubles: and those that love Plays, and such Huntings, resemble jealous men, who eagerly pursue what they apprehend to overtake; or as old Age, which we all pray to attain, but fear to approach.

But now I come to soar my discourse to a much higher pitch, and a more Elevated Subject, and to treat of the most noble part of man, the Soul; and of true Religion the onely way to Heavenly felicity: for *without Holiness, no man shall see the Lord.* We must therefore now, *Madam*, change the Scene of sence for a spiritual one, and climb

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where earthly nature can never follow us, to the pure and high Region of Heaven; which will inform us that the earlier diſcovering our plot of attaining Heaven, will but better the play; and the more ſpeed, the better ſucceſs: for the joys of Heaven are everlaſting, and admit of no increaſe or diminution: not like the divertiſements of Stage-playes, or Hunting, or any earthly delights, which cannot laſt but for a ſeaſon, and decay in our very injoying them, and muſt ſoon leave us, or we them: but Heavenly thoughts, the more and longer we practice them, the better we ſhall like them; Heavenly joyes ſo far exceeding all we

can here leave, as they are all we can ever aſpire to have: this we all know, but few of us practice; and we all love God, but few love to keep his Commandments.

I ſhall therefore now, *Madam*, tell you, as the Prologue to my inſuing diſcourſe, that the grand Plot, and whole deſign of it, moves chiefly on theſe two hinges: firſt, in confirming you, that the foundation of the Proteſtant Religion is built on God's holy Word, the Scriptures; which we Proteſtants eſteem to be a perfect Rule of Faith, and guide to our actions, and the true Touch-ſtone to try all matters by, that relate to the good of our Souls; as certainly con-

containing in it all things neceſſary to our ſalvation. The ſecond thing I chiefly deſign to prove, is, that neither the Pope or the Popiſh Church are infallible: and theſe two ſhall make up the principal ſtories, in the little Model of this ſmall building. The pretended infallibility of the Church of *Rome*, is the grand perſwaſive Argument and lure to invite men to it, and the ſtrongeſt commanding Garriſon in all the Popes power; and all other Arguments and Perſwaſions, are but like the ſmall open Villages about this Garriſon, which muſt be ſervants to them, that are maſters of it; and if a Papiſt can be but once convinc'd, that neither

the Pope, nor the Popiſh Church are infallible, they will ſoon be brought to reaſon, and our remaining differences will not be very conſiderable: I ſhall therefore onely lightly diſcourſe on them, and ſhall no further trouble you, *Madam*, than briefly to anſwer them in my own defence, as I meet them, or as they follow me; and ſhall onely do as the *Wolf* do's when purſued, ſnap and bite in his own defence, againſt all oppoſers, without altering his pace, or changing his Road: I ſhall neither meddle with the Papiſts, but as I meet them in the way, or towards making of my way to my two deſigned points, which are (as I ſaid before,) to prove the Scripture

ture to be a perfect Rule of Faith, and guide to our actions; and to anſwer, as I go, the Papiſts main Arguments and Objections againſt it.

Next, that 'tis againſt all Scripture, and Reaſon, that either the Pope, or the Popiſh Church ſhould be infallible; which is the main deſign of this diſcourſe: and if I can by God's aſſiſtance make but the Papiſts believe Reaſon, (when againſt their own Church,) I doubt not but by this little Pigmie-diſcourſe (as very dwarfiſh as 'tis,) not onely to hinder many tottering Proteſtants from turning Papiſts, but to bring ſome ſtubborn Papiſts to turn Proteſtants, or at leaſt not to have ſuch an infallible

good

good opinion of their Church, and ſo damnable a bad one of ours.

And now, *Madam*, 'tis requiſite that this my diſcourſe ſhould be ended, as ſoon as your Patience; and therefore all that I ſhall adde, either to the excuſing my ſelf, or juſtifying Mr. *Chillingworth*, is, that thus far of this diſcourſe being my own writing, I confeſs, deſerves onely my Apology, and ſcarce your peruſal; but the following diſcourſe being extracted out of Mr. *Chillingworth*, deſerves your reading, but needs not any Apology.

And becauſe I find the word Proteſtant is ſo badly and overlargely interpreted; I ſhall firſt

firſt acquaint you, that we are not to underſtand by the word Proteſtant, the Doctrine of *Luther*, or *Calvin*, or *Geneva*, or onely the Articles of the Church of *England*, but that wherein they all agree with perfect Harmony, That the Bible is a perfect Rule of our Faith, and guide to our Actions; and this (after having made the moſt diligent and impartial ſearch of the true way to Eternal happineſs) I fully believe, and that we can never find any convincing ſatisfaction, but on this Rock of Gods word, the Bible, which I conceive to be the onely true Religion of Proteſtants.

If the Pope were indeed (what

(what he unjuſtly ſayes he is, and the Papiſts unreaſonably believe him to be,) an infallible guide, then there needed no Bible ; but if the Bible be, then there needs no Pope : for if I were to go a Journey, and had a guide that could not erre, what need I be taught the way ? and having ſuch a guide, what need I apply my ſelf to another ? So that, in a word, let us inform our ſelves the beſt we can, and conſider as much as we pleaſe : the more conſideration we take, the more confirmation we ſhall find, that there is no other foundation for a conſidering Chriſtian to build an aſſured dependency on, than the Scriptures : for I am fully aſſur'd that God do's not

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(and therefore man ought not to) require of any man more than this, to believe the Scripture to be the word of God, to uſe our beſt indeavours to find the true ſenſe of it, and to live to our utmoſt according to it.

This I am ſure in reaſon we ought to believe; a wiſer choice than if I ſhould guide my ſelf by the Roman Churches Authority, and Infallibility; when really they have nothing of certainty, but their uncertainty; witneſs Pope againſt Pope, Councils againſt Councils, ſome of their Fathers againſt others; and rather then fail, ſome againſt themſelves: new Traditions inrolled, and old ones Caſhiered; in a word, one Church againſt another,

and

and (if that be not enough) the Church of one age, againſt the Church of another: whereas the Scripture being true and unalterable, and containing all things neceſſary to our Salvation; I am ſecure, that by believing nothing elſe, I ſhall believe no falſhood in matter of Faith; and if I miſtake the true ſenſe of Scripture, and ſo fall into error; yet I am ſecured from any dangerous error, becauſe whilſt I am truly indeavouring to find the true ground of Scripture, I cannot but hold my error without obſtinacy, and be ready to forſake it, when a more probable and true ſenſe ſhall appear unto me: and then being aſſur'd, that all neceſſary truths are plainly ſet

ſet down in Scripture, I am certain by believing the Scripture, to believe all neceſſary truth: and he that do's ſo, if his life be anſwerable to his Faith, how is it poſſible he ſhould fail of Salvation?

And though the Roman Church pretend to be a perfect guide of Faith, and teacher of all Divine Truths; yet ſure that title might much better, & more juſtly be given to the Scriptures, as their Teacher and Maſter.

The Roman Church brags how ancient their Church is; but doubtleſs they cannot deny but the Scripture is more ancient, if they will but allow the Mother to be older than the Child.

The Papiſts ſay their Church

is a means of keeping Chriſtians at unity, ſo are alſo the Scriptures, to thoſe that believe them in unity of belief, in matters neceſſary.

The Papiſts ſay their Church is Catholick: certainly the Scripture is more Catholick; for all true Chriſtians in the univerſal world do now, and ever did believe the Scriptures to be the Word of God, ſo much at leaſt, as to contain all things neceſſary to ſalvation; whereas the Papiſts ſay, They onely are the true Church; and all other Chriſtians (though more than they) give them the lye for ſaying ſo.

By following the Scriptures, I follow that whereby the Papiſts

piſts prove their Churches Infallibility: for were it not for Scripture, what pretence could the Papiſts have for it, or what true Notion could they receive of it? So that by ſo doing, the Papiſts muſt plainly confeſs, That they themſelves are ſurer of the Truth of Scripture, than of their Churches Authority; for we muſt be ſurer of the proof, than of the thing proved, or elſe 'tis no proof: ſo that following Scripture, I follow that which muſt be true, if the Papiſts Church be true; for their Church allows it's truth: whereas if I follow the *Roman* Church, I muſt follow that, which though the Scripture be true, may be falſe, nay more,

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muſt be falſe, if the Scripture be true, becauſe the Scripture is againſt it. Following the Papiſts Church, I muſt be a ſervant to my Saviour, and a ſubject to my King, onely at the pleaſure of the Pope; and renounce my Allegiance, when the Popes will is to declare him an Heretick; nay, I muſt believe Vertue Vice, and Vice Vertue, if he pleaſes; for he both makes & unmakes Scripture as he thinks convenient; witneſs the *Apocrypha*, which hath not paſt for Canonical, but of late years, in the Papiſts Church, who interpret Scripture according to their Doctrine, but will not judge their Doctrine according to Scripture; for none like to weigh light Mony in true ſcales. In ſhort,

ſhort, the Pope adds, and leſſens, and interprets Divine Laws as he pleaſes; and they muſt ſtand for Laws, and be obeyed as ſuch; ſo that in effect he rules his people by his own Laws, and his own Laws by his own Lawyers, his Clergy, who dare not ſpeak nor uphold them, other than juſt ſuch as the Pope would have them; and indeed Cardinal *Richelieu* gave the reaſon why more hold the Pope above the Councils, than the Councils above the Pope; Becauſe the Pope gave Archbiſhopricks and Biſhopricks, but the Councils had none to give: and though the Papiſts ſay, his Holineſs cannot erre, yet let not the Papiſts forget what God ſayes

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in the Scripture, if (not onely the Pope, but if) an Angel from Heaven ſhall preach any thing againſt the Goſpel of Chriſt, let him be accurſed.

In following the Scripture we have God's expreſs command, and no colour of any prohibition: but to believe the Popiſh Church infallible, we have no Scripture-command at all, much leſs an expreſs one.

Following the Popiſh Church, we muſt believe many things, not onely above reaſon, but againſt reaſon, witneſs Tranſubſtantiation; whereas following the Scripture, we ſhall believe many myſteries, but no impoſſibilities; many things above

above our reaſon, but nothing againſt it. Nay, we need not believe any thing, which reaſon will not convince us we ought to believe: for reaſon will convince any ſober Chriſtian, that the Scripture is the Word of God; and there's no reaſon can be greater than this, that God ſayes it, therefore it muſt be true.

In a word, we Proteſtants believe that all things neceſſary to our ſalvation are evidently contain'd in Scripture, and what is not there evidently contained, cannot be neceſſary to be believed; and our reaſon is juſt and clear, Becauſe nothing can challenge our Belief, as to ſalvation, but what hath deſcended to us from our Bleſ-

Bleſſed Saviour Chriſt Jeſus, by original and univerſal Tradition. Now nothing but Scripture hath thus deſcended to us, therefore nothing but Scripture can challenge our Belief.

Now the grand difference between the Papiſts and us, concerning the Scripture, is this: We hold the Scripture to be the onely perfect Rule whereby to judge of Controverſies. The Papiſts ſay, That they acknowledge the Scriptures to be a perfect Rule: onely they deny that it excludes unwritten Tradition; which in effect is this: they ſay, 'Tis as perfect a Rule, as a Writing can be, onely they deny it to be as perfect a Rule as a Writing

ting may be. Either they must revoke their acknowledgment, or retract their contradiction of it, for both cannot possibly stand together: for if they will but stand to what they have granted, That Scripture is as perfect a Rule of Faith as a Writing can be, they must then grant it so compleat, as it needs no addition; and so evident, that it needs no interpretation: for both these properties are requisite to a perfect Rule. And that a writing is capable of both these properties and perfections, is most plain: for he that denies it, must say that something may be spoken which cannot be written; for if such a compleat evident rule of Faith may be

delivered by word of mouth, as the Papiſts pretend may, and is, and whatſoever is delivered by word of mouth, may alſo be written; then ſuch a compleat and evident rule of Faith, may alſo be written: for the Argument is moſt plain, Whatſoever may be ſpoken may be written; a perfect rule of Faith has been ſpoken, therefore a perfect rule of Faith may be written. If the Papiſts cannot ſee this plain concluſion, they had beſt deſire more light to be added to the Sun.

The Papiſts pretend their Church to be the infallible Teacher of all Divine Truths, and an infallible Interpreter of all obſcurities in the Faith: but the Papiſts will, I hope, give the

us leave to admire, how they can pretend to Teach them in all places, without writing them down; that is certainly beyond the reach of their power to do, as well as our belief that 'tis to be done.

And for the Papists saying there must be a living authority beside the Scripture, or else controversies cannot be ended; Protestants answer: Necessary controversies are and may be decided; and if they be not, 'tis not the defect of the rule in Scripture, but the default of men; so that if necessary controversies be ended, 'tis no matter if the unnecessary be not: for doubtless if God had required it, he would also have provided some means to effect it;

but ſure it does not ſtand with any reaſon it ſhould be the Pope, becauſe he cannot be a Judge, being a party: indeed in civil controverſies, a Judge without being a party may end them; but in controverſies of Religion, a Judge of neceſſity muſt be a concerned party; and I am ſure the Pope to us is the chief, and moſt concerned party, being really concerned as much as his Popedom is worth.

Now we Proteſtants make the Papiſts this plain anſwer, that the means of agreeing differences, muſt neceſſarily be, either by the appointment of God, or men: men ſure it cannot be, for then rational wiſe Proteſtants may do as well as Papiſts; for let the Papiſts

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ſhew us if they can, where God hath appointed that the Pope alone, or any confirm'd by the Pope, or that Society of Chriſtians which adhere to him, ſhall be the infallible Judge of controverſies: we deſire the Papiſts, if they can, to let us ſee any of thoſe aſſertions plainly ſet down in Scripture, as in all reaſon a thing of this nature ought to be, or at leaſt delivered with a full conſent of Fathers; nay let them ſo much as ſhew us where 'tis in plain terms taught by any one Father in Four hundred years after our bleſſed Saviour Chriſt: and if the Papiſts cannot do this, as we believe they cannot; where I pray is their either Scripture or Rea-

ſon, that the Pope or his Councils ſhould obtrude themſelves as Judges overus Proteſtants?

Next, we would deſire to know from the Papiſts, whether they do certainly know, or not, the ſence of thoſe Scriptures by which they are led to the knowledge of their Church; for if they do not, how come they to know their Church is infallible? but if they do, then ſure they ought to give us leave to have the ſame means and ability to know other plain places in Scripture, which they have to know theirs: for if all Scriptures be obſcure, how come they to know the ſenſe of thoſe places? but if ſome place of it be plain, why pray may not Proteſtants under-

underſtand them as well as Papiſts?

The Papiſts ſay, That the Scriptures are in themſelves true and infallible, yet without the direction of the Church we have no certain means to know which Tranſlations be faithful and Canonical, or what is the true meaning of Scriptures: and this is the common Argument and general Belief of all Papiſts. To which the Proteſtants anſwer, That yet all theſe things muſt firſt be known, before we can know the directions of their Church to be infallible: for the Papiſts cannot pretend any other proof of it, but onely ſome Texts of Canonical Scripture, truly interpreted; there-

fore either they muſt be miſtaken in thinking there is no other means to know theſe things, but their Churches infallible direction; or elſe we muſt be excluded from all means of knowing her directions to be infallible: for the proof muſt be ſurer than the thing to be proved, or 'tis no proof. And upon better conſideration, I am confident the Papiſts dare not deny, but that 'tis moſt certain, Faith hath been given by other means than the Church: for ſure they will not ſay, that *Adam* received Faith by the Church, nor *Abraham*, nor *Job*, who received Faith by Revelation; and alſo the Holy Apoſtles, who received Faith by the mira-

Miracles and Preaching of our Bleſſed Saviour: ſo that you ſee, and they cannot deny, but their general Doctrine is contradictory. And to make it yet plainer, I deſire to know of the Papiſts, if they ſhould meet with a man that believed neither Scripture, Church, nor God, but declares he is both ready and willing to believe them all, if the Papiſt can ſhew him ſufficient grounds to build his Faith upon; will the Papiſt tell ſuch a man, there are no certain grounds how he may be converted to their Church, or there are? if the Papiſts ſay there are none, they make Religion an uncertain thing: but if they ſay there are, then they muſt neceſſarily either

fore either they must be mistaken in thinking there is no other means to know these things, but their Churches infallible direction; or else we must be excluded from all means of knowing her directions to be infallible: for the proof must be surer than the thing to be proved, or 'tis no proof. And upon better consideration, I am confident the Papists dare not deny, but that 'tis most certain, Faith hath been given by other means than the Church: for sure they will not say, that *Adam* received Faith by the Church, nor *Abraham*, nor *Job*, who received Faith by Revelation; and also the Holy Apostles, who received Faith by the mira-

Miracles and Preaching of our Bleſſed Saviour: ſo that you ſee, and they cannot deny, but their general Doctrine is contradictory. And to make it yet plainer, I deſire to know of the Papiſts, if they ſhould meet with a man that believed neither Scripture, Church, nor God, but declares he is both ready and willing to believe them all, if the Papiſt can ſhew him ſufficient grounds to build his Faith upon; will the Papiſt tell ſuch a man, there are no certain grounds how he may be converted to their Church, or there are? if the Papiſts ſay there are none, they make Religion an uncertain thing: but if they ſay there are, then they muſt neceſſarily either

argue woman-like, that their Church is infallible, becauſe it is infallible; or elſe ſhew there are other certain grounds beſides ſaying the Church is infallible, to prove its Infallibility.

The Papiſts demand of the Proteſtants, if they believe the Apoſtles wrote all the Scriptures: for if they did not, how come we to call and believe them Apoſtolical, and not the Writings of thoſe that writ them? To which we anſwer; Though all the Scriptures were not written by the Apoſtles themſelves, yet they were all confirm'd by them; and though a Clerk writes a Statute, and the King, Lords and Commons confirm it in Parliament; I

believe

believe they would esteem it very improper to call it the Statute of such a Clerk, though writ by him, but an Act of Parliament, because it was confirm'd by all their consents, and so becomes their Act, not the Clerks.

The Papists desire us to tell them in what Language the Scriptures remained uncorrupted; and we desire them to satisfie us whether it be necessary to know it, or not necessary: if it be not, I hope we may do well without it; but if it be necessary, we desire first that they will please to tell us what became of their Church for One thousand five hundred years together, all which time they must confess, they had no cer-

certainty of Scripture; till the time that Pope *Clement* the eighth ſet forth their approved Edition of the vulgar Tranſlation; and none ſure can have the confidence to deny, but that there was great variety of Copies currant in divers parts of their Church, and read ſo; which Copies might be falſe in ſome things, but more than one ſort of them could not poſſibly be true in all things. And Pope *Sixtus Quintus* his Bible differ'd from Pope *Clement* his Bible, in a multtiude of places; which makes us deſire to be ſatisfied of the Papiſts, whether before Pope *Sixtus Quintus* his time, their Church had any defined Canon of Scriptures or not: for if they

they had not, then 'tis moſt evident that their Church was a moſt excellent keeper of Scripture, for fifteen hundred years together, that had not all that time defin'd what was Scripture, and what was not; but if the Papiſts ſay they had, then we demand, Was that ſet forth by Pope *Sixtus Quintus*, or was it ſet forth by Pope *Clement?* or if by a third different from them both, why do they not name him? if it were that ſet forth by Pope *Sixtus*, then 'tis now condemn'd by Pope *Clement*; if that of *Clement*, 'twas condemned by that of *Sixtus*: ſo that error muſt neceſſarily be betwixt them, let them chuſe which ſide they pleaſe.

And

And for the book of *Maccabees*, I hope they will allow it defin'd Canonical before St. *Gregorie's* time, though he would not allow it Canonical, but onely for the Edification of the Church.

We further desire to be satisfied of the Papists, if the books of *Ecclesiasticus*, and *Wisedome*, and the Epistle to St. *James*, were by the holy Apostles approved Canonical, or not: if they were approved by the Apostles Canonical, sure the Papists cannot deny, but they had a sufficient definition and authority, not to question them, and therefore err'd in doing so. And if they were not approved Canonical by the Apostles, with what impu-

dence

dence dare the Roman Church now approve them as Canonical, and yet pretend that all their Doctrine is Apoſtolical? And if they ſay theſe Books were not queſtioned, they ſhould do well to tell which Books they mean, which were not alwayes known to be Canonical, but have afterwards been received by the Roman Church to be ſuch: ſo that this Argument reaches thoſe, as well as theſe.

And further we are to conſider, that there is not the ſame reaſons for the Churches abſolute Infallibility, as for the Apoſtles and Scriptures: for if the Church falls into an error, it may be reformed by comparing it with the Rules of

of the Apoſtles Doctrine in Scripture; but if the Apoſtles have err'd in delivering the Doctrine of Chriſtianity in Scripture, then the Roman Church cannot be infallible: for Apoſtles, Prophets, and Canonical Writers, are the foundation of the Church, as St. *Paul* ſayes 'tis built upon the foundation of Apoſtles and Prophets.

And now to conclude this part of my diſcourſe in very few words, let the Papiſts anſwer, if they can, but theſe five words. *All Scripture is Divinely inſpired.* Let them ſhew us ſo much for the Roman Church, and ſhew us if they can, where 'tis written in Scripture, that all the decrees of the

the Popiſh Church are Divinely inſpired, and all our Controverſies will be at an end: but I believe they can never do that, without another *Tranſubſtantiation-Miracle* of words.

The Papiſts deſire us to ſhew them an exact Catalogue of our fundamentals; to which we anſwer, That God may be ſufficiently known to one, and not ſufficiently declared to another, and conſequently, that may be fundamental and neceſſary to one, which is not to another; which variety of circumſtances renders it impoſſible to ſet down an exact Catalogue of Fundamentals: for God requires more of them to whom he gives more, and leſs

leſs of thoſe to whom he gives leſs; more of a Commander of a Kingdom, than a poor ſimple Turn-ſpit. 'Tis a plain revelation of God to us Proteſtants, that the Sacrament of the Euchariſt ſhould be adminiſtred in both kinds, 1 *Cor.* 11 *c.* 28 *verſ.* and that the publick Hymns and prayers of the Church ſhould be in ſuch a Language as is moſt for Edification, 1 *Cor.* 14, and 15, 16. yet the Church of *Rome*, not ſeeing this, by reaſon of the vail, would be very angry, if we told them 'twould prejudice their ſuppoſed Infallibility.

We read in St. *Matthew*, that the Goſpel was to be Preacht to all Nations; and this

this was a truth revealed before our Saviours Ascention: yet if the Church had been asked, before the conversion of *Cornelius*, they would have certainly told you, it had not been necessary to teach all Nations; for 'tis most apparent out of the 11*th* of the *Acts*, they all believed so, until St. *Peter* was better informed by a vision from Heaven, and the conversion of *Cornelius*; and then they turn'd quite of a differing belief, and esteemed it necessary to teach all Nations; and yet were still a Church. The Papists are pleased to say, the Protestants differ in Fundamentals; which indeed appears to us very irrational: for if they say, We Protestants differ

differ in Fundamentals, how then can they ſay, We are members of the ſame Church, one with another, more than they are with ours, or ours with theirs? and why do they object our difference more with one another, than with themſelves? and if we do not differ in Fundamentals, why do they upbraid us with Fundamental differences amongſt our ſelves? We believe the Catholick Church cannot periſh, yet we believe ſhe may and did erre, as I prov'd juſt before: but thus much we Proteſtants declare in general, That we eſteem it ſufficient for any mans ſalvation, to believe Gods Word, the Scripture, and that it contains all things neceſſary

to

to our ſalvation; and that we do our utmoſt endeavours to find, believe, and follow the true ſenſe of it; and being we are ſure that all that is any way neceſſary is there, believing all that is there, we are ſure we believe all that is neceſſary.

And therefore 'tis but reaſonable to ſay, that any private perſon, who truly believes the Scriptures, and heartily endeavours to know the Will of God, and to do it, is as ſecure, nay ſecurer from the danger of erring in Fundamentals, than the *Roman* Church: for 'tis impoſſible any man ſo qualified ſhould fall into an errour that can prove damnable to him; for God requires no more of any

any man to his ſalvation, but onely his true and beſt endeavours to be ſaved. And for the Papiſts Sacrament of Confeſſion, which they hold is ſo abſolute and neceſſary, and ſo much upbraid us for the want of it; we anſwer: We know no ſuch abſolute neceſſity of it; but yet we hold, we muſt not onely confeſs our ſins, but forſake them, or we ſhall not find mercy: And we Proteſtants farther believe, that they that confeſs their ſins, ſhall find mercy, though they onely confeſs them to God, and not to man: And more, that they who confeſs them both to God and man, and do not in time forſake them, ſhall not find mercy.

And

And ſo for the Papiſts Sacrament of Repentance for Remiſſion of ſins; though we Proteſtants know no ſuch, yet we allow and obſerve the ſame Duty, but publick before the Church; which was the conſtant practice of the primitive Church; and *Rhenanus* himſelf, though ſo great a Champion for the Papiſts, writes, That the confeſſion then uſed, was before the Church; and that *Auricular* confeſſion was not then in the World.

The Papiſts will tell you that our Biſhops have not the true power of Ordination: but that has been ſo clearly anſwered, and ſo truely proved at large by ſo many already, as I ſhall not need here ſo much as

as to name it: onely let me in a word remember the Papists, that they cannot well deny, but that the *Donatists* themselves, whom the Papists esteemed as bad as us, as being Hereticks and Schismaticks; yet St. *Austin*, and *Optatus* Bishop of *Rome*, did both acknowledge that they had the same Baptism, Creed, and Sacrament; and that these *Donatist* Fathers, though Schismaticks and Hereticks, gave true Ordination, or else some of these were not then esteemed Sacraments; therefore let them take which they please, there must be error of one side.

The Papists pretend they have an unanswerable Objection against Protestants, which is,

is, That we have discords in matters of Faith, without any means of agreement: to which we answer, that the Scripture does not let us want solid means of agreement in matters necessary to salvation; and for our agreement in all controversies of Religion, either they must say we have means to agree about them, or we have not: if they say we have, why did they before deny it? if they say we have no means, why are they so unjust to find fault with us for not agreeing, when they themselves say we have no means to agree?

But for a Plaister to this soar, they are so extraordinary civil, as to tell us, we may come to their Church; and they

agree in matters of faith: but the plain truth of it is, that they define all matters of faith to be those wherein they agree; so that to say the Roman Church does agree in matters of Faith, is but to say, they agree in those things they do agree in: and sure they cannot deny, but we Protestants do the same.

But we must desire the Papists to give us leave to tell them, that they most grosly mistake, if they say, they agree in matters of Faith: as for proof; some of them hold it against Faith, to take the Oath of Allegiance, others 'tis against Faith to refuse that Oath.

Some hold it of Faith, that

the Pope is head of the Church by Divine Law; others the contrary: ſome hold it of Faith that the bleſſed Virgin was free from actual ſin, others the contrary; ſome that the Popes power over Princes in Temporalities is *de fide*, others the contrary: ſome that 'tis univerſal Tradition that the Virgin *Mary* was conceived in actual ſin, others the contrary. And how the *Jeſuites* and *Franciſcans*, and other Orders differ to this day, I am ſure needs no *memorandum*; and the beſt Jeaſt of all is, the Papiſts have not ſo much as yet agreed in their very pretended means of agreement, and yet have the confidence to pretend an Unity more than the Proteſtants;

for ſome of them ſay, The Pope with a Council may determine all Controverſies, others deny it: Some hold, That a general Council, without a Pope, may do ſo; others deny this: Others ſay, Both in conjunction are infallible Determiners, others deny this: And ſome among the Papiſts hold, The acceptation of the Decrees of Councils by the Univerſal Church, is the onely way to decide Controverſies; which others deny, by denying their Church to be infallible; and yet every part pretends to be part of the Church.

In a word, can the Papiſts deny, but that there has been Popes againſt Popes, Councils againſt Councils; Nay, Coun-

Councils confirmed by Popes, againſt Popes confirmed by Councils: And Laſtly, the Church of ſome Ages, againſt the Church of other Ages? And ſince every part of the Body is ſo out of order, methinks they ſhould not brag of ſo perfect a health as they do.

The Papiſts ſay (and do but ſay it) that their Doctrine is held Catholick; and therefore they eſteem it an inſolent madneſs of us Proteſtants, to diſpute againſt the practice of the whole Church. Firſt, That their Doctrine is Catholick, we anſwer, That the greateſt number of Chriſtians in the world deny it; ſo that they cannot truly ſay, we diſpute

against the practice of the whole Church. And farther we ſay, Suppoſing we ſhould in Complement to them grant, that their Church is Catholick and Univerſal; yet we ſay, That is no ſufficient proof it came Originally from the Apoſtles; witneſs the Doctrine of the *Millenaries*, and the neceſſity of the Euchariſt for Infants; which was generally taught by the Univerſal Church, and believed as Apoſtolical Tradition, but yet contradicted by the Univerſal Church afterwards: This, I am ſure, the Papiſts dare not deny; ſo that we unavoidably caſt the Papiſts upon this Rock, that they muſt either conclude the Apoſtles were Fountains of contradicto-

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ry Doctrines, or that the Universal Doctrine of the present Church is no sufficient proof that it came originally from the Apostles, because the Church Universal of one time and the Church Universal of another time did differ.

Next, for their saying, 'tis insolent madness to dispute against the practice of the whole Church; First, we are sure, we can bring more Christian witnesses that deny they are the whole Church, than they can bring to prove it: but supposing we were as mad as they say we are, and would have us to be, to dispute against the whole practice of the Church; yet I hope we may desire to know of the Papists

if they can deny but that 'twas the practice of the whole Church in St. *Auſtine*'s time, and eſteemed then an Apoſtolical Tradition even by St. *Auſtine* himſelf, that the Euchariſt ſhould be adminiſtred to Infants? And then let them tell us, Whether it be inſolent madneſs to diſpute againſt the practice of the whole Church, or is it not? if it be not, why do they accuſe us for it? but if it be inſolent madneſs, how mad and inſolent is the Papiſts Church, not onely to diſpute againſt this practice of the Univerſal Church, of adminiſtring the Euchariſt to Infants, but utterly aboliſhing the practice of it?

So that the very worſt the Pa-

Papiſts can ſay of us, allowing what they ſay to be true, is, that we but do, what they themſelves own already to have done.

And though the Papiſts are pleaſed to ſay that the Holy Scriptures, and ancient Fathers, aſſign ſeparation from the viſible Church as a mark of Hereſie, yet they cannot ſhew one plain Text of Scripture to confirm it.

And for the Papiſts bragging of the Antiquity and Univerſality of their Churches Doctrine, (though we allow it very ancient, bating the Primitive times) we anſwer firſt as to its Antiquity, we deſire to ſee what Antiquity they can ſhew for their giving the Communion but in one kind, when

they know that the Adminiſtring it in both kinds, was the practice of the Church for a Thouſand years after Chriſt; what Antiquity for the lawfulneſs and expediency of the Latine Service; for the preſent uſe of Indulgences; for the Popes power in Temporalities over Princes; for the Picturing the Trinity; for the lawfulneſs of worſhipping Pictures and Images; for their Beads; for their whole worſhip of the bleſſed Virgin; for their Oblations, in the notion of Sacrifices to her and other Saints; for their ſaying *Pater Noſters* and *Creeds* to the Honour of them, and *Ave Maries* to the Virgin *Mary*; for the infallibility of the Biſhop or Church of

of *Rome*; for their Doctrine of the bleſſed Virgins Immunity from actual ſin; for the neceſſity of Auricular Confeſſion; for the neceſſity of the Prieſts intention to obtain benefit by any of their Sacraments; and laſtly, for their licentious Doctrine in holding that though a man lives and dies without the practiſe of any Chriſtian Vertue, and with the Habits of many damnable ſins unmortified; yet if at the laſt moment of his life he has any ſorrow for his ſins, and joyn confeſſion to it, he ſhall certainly be ſaved: This is a Doctrine may keep many ſouls out of Heaven, but I doubt will ſcarce carry any one there. So that the Papiſts Doctrine being ancient

cient, is nothing, as long as 'tis evident that they hold many dangerous errors: as for instance, the *Millenaries*, and the *Communicating Infants* was more ancient than their Doctrine; and 'tis plain that Antiquity, unless it be absolute and primative, is not a certain sign of true Doctrine: And the very Apostles themselves, assure us, that in their days the mystery of Iniquity was working.

The Papists demand how comes it to pass that their Doctrine is so universal, (forgetting that weeds spread faster than good herbs:) And we ask them how the errors of the *Millenaries*, and the *Communicating Infants* became so uni-

univerſal? let them tell us this, and we will tell them that: for what is done in ſome, may be done in others.

The Papiſts ask us where our Church was before *Luther*; and tell us, becauſe 'twas no Church before him, therefore it can be no true Church at all. To which we anſwer, That this cauſe is no cauſe: for though *Luther* had no being before *Luther*, yet none can deny, but that he was when he was, though he could not be before he was. So there may be a true Church after *Luther*, though there was none for ſome Ages before him: as ſince *Columbus* his time there have been Chriſtians in *America*, though there were none for many Ages before.

fore. For it does not follow, that nothing but a Church can possibly get a Church, nor that the present being of a true Church depends necessarily upon the perpetuity of a Church in all Ages. For though I cannot deny the Churches perpetuity, yet that's not here necessary to our difference: but that a false Church (by Gods providence over-ruling it) may preserve a means of confuting their own Heresies, and so reduce men to Truth, and raise a true Church, (I mean the integrity of the Word of God with men.) Thus the *Jews* preserve means to make men *Christians*, and *Papists* preserve means to make men *Protestants*, and the *Protestants* false Church (as the

Ro-

Romanes call it) preſerves men *Papiſts*. Nor does it appear that the perpetuity of the Church is the truth of the Papiſts Church: for they ſpeak as if they were the onely Chriſtians in the world before *Luther*; when the whole world knows, that this is but talk, and that there were other Chriſtians beſides the Papiſts that might have perpetuated the Church, though there had not been then one Papiſt in being. For ſure there was a Catholike Church before the *Romane* one.

Next, the Papiſts ſay, To hold that the viſible Church is not perpetual, is a Hereſie; ſo that *Luther*'s Reformation being but particular, and not univerſal, nor

but

but of late date, it can have nothing to do with the visible and perpetual Church. Which the Protestants answer thus: To say the visible Church is not perpetual, is properly a Heresie; but the Papists cannot deny, but that the Apostles who preach'd the Gospel in the beginning, did believe the Church universal, though their preaching at the beginning was not so. So *Luther* also might well believe the universal Church, though his Reformation was but particular; the Church in the Apostles time being universal *de jure* of right, but not *de facto* in fact.

Nor did *Luther* and his followers (as the Papists are pleased to mis-call many Protestants)

ſtants) forſake the whole Church, but the corruptions of it, in renouncing ſome of their corrupt practices; and this the Proteſtants ſay they did without Schiſm, becauſe they had cauſe to do it; and no man can have cauſe to be a Schiſmatick, becauſe he is onely one who leaves the Church without a cauſe: for 'tis not onely ſeparation, but a cauſeleſs ſeparation from the Church, that is Schiſmatical: and I think 'twill not be amiſs, before I go any farther, to diſtinguiſh the difference between Hereſie & Schiſm. *Hereſie is an obſtinate defence of any error againſt any neceſſary Article of the Christian Faith. Schiſm is a cauſeleſs ſeparation of one part of the* Church

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Church from another. Now we Proteſtants ſay ſtill, that we never forſook the whole Church, or the external Communion of it, but onely that part of it which is corrupted, and is to be fear'd will ſtill continue ſo, viz. *The Papiſts Church*; and forſook not, but onely reformed another part, which part they themſelves were. And ſure the Papiſts will not ſay, the Proteſtants forſook themſelves, nor their own Communion: and therefore the Papiſts Argument muſt be very weak, in urging that the Proteſtants joyned themſelves to no other part of the Church, therefore they muſt ſeparate from the whole Church; which the Proteſtants

ſay

ay is a falſe concluſion, in as much as they themſelves were part of it, & ſtill continue ſo; & therefore the Proteſtants could no more ſeparate from the whole, than from themſelves.

So that by the Rule of Reaſon, if Proteſtants be Schiſmaticks, becauſe they differ from one part of the viſible Church; by the ſame Reaſon the Proteſtants may ſay that the Roman Church is in a manner made up of Schiſmaticks: for the *Jeſuits* are Schiſmaticks from the *Dominicans*, and the *Dominicans* from the *Jeſuits*, and the *Jeſuits* from the *Canoniſts*; the *Franciſcans* from the *Dominicans*, and the *Dominicans* from the *Franciſcans*: for all theſe (as the world knows) differ

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in point of Doctrine, and betwixt them there is an irreconcileable contradiction; and therefore one part must be in error. And if the Papists will but stand to justifie what they declare as truth, *That every error against a revealed truth is a Heresie*; they holding for certain as a revealed truth, the immaculate conception of the Virgin *Mary*, then consequently the *Dominicans* that hold and declare it an error in Doctrine, must necessarily hold a Heresie. Now it may be a fault to be in error, because it many times proceeds from a fault; but sure Protestants forsaking error, it cannot be a sin, unless to be in error, be a Vertue: so hardly do Papists deal with

with us Proteſtants, as they will either damn us in making us follow their falſe opinions, or elſe brand us as Schiſmaticks for leaving them.

And yet the rational ſort of *Papiſts* can hardly deny, but the *Proteſtant Religion* muſt be a ſafer *Religion* than theirs, in *worſhipping Pictures*, in *Invocating Saints* and *Angels*; in *denying the Lay-men* the *Communion in both kinds*, as was commanded by our *bleſſed Saviour*; *in celebrating* their *Church-Service in an unknown Tongue*, which was condemned by St. *Paul*; in *adoring the Sacrament*: and in *all theſe* a rational Papiſt cannot deny, but he is on the more dangerous ſide, as to the committing

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of ſin; and the Proteſtant in the more ſecure way, as to the avoiding it.

For in all theſe things, if *Proteſtants* ſay true, the *Papiſts* do that which is impious; but on the other ſide, if the *Papiſts* were in the right, yet the *Proteſtants* might be ſecure enough too: for their fault would be onely this, that they ſhould onely not do ſome things which the *Papiſts* themſelves confeſs is not altogether neceſſary to be done.

And truly the Proteſtants are ſo Charitably civil, as only to ſay of Papiſts, as St. *Auſtine* did of the *Donatiſts*, *That Catholicks approved the Doctrine of the* Donatiſts, *but abhorred their Hereſie of Rebaptization.*

So

So *Proteſtants* approve the Fundamental and neceſſary Truths which the *Papiſts* retain, by which many good ſouls among them may be ſaved; but abhor the many ſuperſtitions they uſe in their Religion. And ſuppoſing theſe errours of the *Popiſh Church* where in themſelves not damnable, to them that believe as they profeſs; yet for us *Proteſtants* to profeſs what we do not believe, and eſteem thoſe as Divine Truths, which we believe not to be either Divine or true; would be doubtleſs damnable as to us: for 'tis certain, Two men may do the ſame thing, and it may be ſinful to one, and not to the other: as ſuppoſe a married woman gives her ſelf

out

out to be a widow, and one knowing her Husband to be alive, marries her, doubtless his injoyment of her was adulterous: but a second man comes, and after seeing her pretended Husband buried, marries her, and dies without the least information of her First Husbands being then alive; his ignorance sure protected him from sin, and the second Husbands knowledge of the sin he acted, condemned him of Adultery; and though his fault might be palliated with some excuses, yet it can never be defended by any just Apology. And so though we read in Scripture, that it was St. *Paul's* Judgement, that meat offered to Idols might lawfully be eaten;

eaten; yet he ſays, if any ſhou'd eat it with a doubtful conſcience, he ſhould ſin, and be condemned for ſo doing.

And ſuppoſing we Proteſtants ought not to have forſook the Papiſts Church, for ſin, and errours, if ſhe had not enjoyn'd and impoſed them on us; yet ſince ſhe does maintain them with ſuch obſtinacy, and impoſes them with ſuch Tyranny, we ought certainly to ſay with St. *Peter*, and St. *John*, *'Tis better to forſake men than God*; and leave the Popiſh Church-Communion, rather than commit or profeſs known errours, as Divine Truths; for as the Prophet *Ezekiel* tells us, that to ſay *The*

Lord hath ſaid ſo, when the Lord hath not ſaid ſo, is a high preſumption, and great ſin, be the matter never ſo ſmall; and therefore when St. *Paul* ſpoke concerning Virgins abſtaining from marriage, he ſaid, *He had no Commandment of the Lord, but I declare my own judgement of it.* Now if St. *Paul* had given this as God's command, ſurely we might have juſtly contradicted him, and made a diſtinction between Divine Revelation, and Humane Judgement.

So that for a Proteſtant to abide in the Communion of the *Roman Church*, is ſo far from ſecuring him from errour, as that if I or any *Proteſtant* ſhould continue in it, I am con-

confident I could not be ſaved by it: and the reaſon is, becauſe the *Papiſts* will not admit of my Communion, without profeſſing the entire Popiſh Doctrine to be true: and profeſs this I cannot, but I muſt perpetually exulcerate my conſcience: and though the errours of the *Roman* Church were not in themſelves damnable, yet for me to reſiſt known Truths, and to continue in the profeſſion of known Errours and Falſhoods, is certainly a capital ſin, and of great affinity with the ſin which ſhall never be forgiven.

In ſhort, if the errours of the *Roman* Church did not warrant our departure, yet

the tyrannous impoſition of them would be our ſufficient juſtification; for they force us either to forſake the *Papiſts Communion*, or profeſs as *Goſpel-truths* what our conſcience aſſures us is very little akin to them: ſo that the Proteſtants were oblig'd to forſake thoſe errours of the *Popiſh Church*, and not the *Church*, but the errours; and we *Proteſtants* did, and do ſtill continue members of the *Church*; having onely left what appeared moſt plain to us to be *ſuperſtitious* and *impious*. And we ſeparate no more from the *Popiſh Church*, than ſhe has ſeparated from the *Ancient Church*: and indeed, to ſpeak properly, our difference is more

more againſt the *Court*, than *Church* of *Rome*; which has introduced ſo many new ceremonies and practices in the *Popiſh Church*, as was never heard nor practiſed in the primitive Times: as for one inſtance of a Thouſand, I might give you *Their denying the Cup to the Laity*, which was never practiſed in the Church a Thouſand years after our *Saviour*.

But becauſe the *Papiſts* brag ſo much of, and depend ſo entirely on the *Infallibility* of their Church; I ſhall paſs by their Out-works, and ſearch a little into this their Grand Fort, the *Infallibility* of their Church: for except they prove that, they prove nothing; but

in proving that they prove all: and if the *Papiſts* could ſatisfie me either by *Scripture*, or *Reaſon*, that their *Church* is *infallible*, I ſhould not onely be of their *Church* to morrow, but repent I was not ſooner: but really by all that I ever heard or read for their making it good, I find cauſe onely to admire their confidence, but not at all to eſteem their reaſons.

The chief Method they take, and degrees they uſe, to prove the *Infallibility* of their *Church*, are by whole-ſale theſe. Firſt, that St. *Peter* was Head and chief amongſt the *Apoſtles*; and that there was given to him and his Succeſſors by our *Saviour*, Univerſal Au-

tho-

thority over his Militant *Church*; That the Pope or Bishop of *Rome* is St. *Peter's* Successor, and has his Authority of Universal Bishop; and consequently the *Roman Church* being built upon this *Rock* is *infallible*: all which I doubt not but to prove to be inconsistent with, and contradictory both to *Scripture* and *Reason*.

As to the first point of St. *Peter's* being Head of the *Apostles*, which the *Papists* all stile him, and say he was called from thence *Cephas*, which is derived from the *Greek* word Head: it is a most gross mistake; for *Cephas* is a *Syriack* word that signifies *Stone*; but this is onely by the by. Now we *Protestants* say, though we

allow St. *Peter* might have primacy of Order, yet we cannot grant he had ſupremacy of power over the other *Apoſtles*; for ſure it cannot ſtand with the leaſt reaſon, that St. *Peter* ſhould have authority over all the *Apoſtles*, and yet never act the leaſt authority over any one of them.

Nor is it reaſonable to believe, that St. *Peter* having authority over all the *Apoſtles* for about 25 years together, ſhould never ſhew the leaſt power over any of them all that time, nor ſo much as receive the leaſt ſubjection from them: ſure any one muſt think this as ſtrange, and unreaſonable, as if a King of *England* for 25 years together ſhould not

do one Act of Regality among his ſubjects, nor receive any one acknowledgment from them.

Nor ſure is it leſs ſtrange and unreaſonable, that the *Papiſts* ſhould ſo many Ages after, know this ſo certainly as they pretend they do, and yet that the *Apoſtles* themſelves, after that theſe words were ſpoke in their hearing by vertue whereof St. *Peter* is pretended to be made their head, ſhould ſtill be ſo ignorant of it, as to queſtion our *Saviour*, *which of them ſhould be the greateſt?* By which ſure we may rationally conclude, they did not then know; for if they did, their queſtion had been needleſs, and ſuperfluous, in

deſiring to be taught, what they already knew.

And what yet appears more ſtrange than all, is, that our Saviour ſhould not have helped them out of their error, by telling them St. *Peter* was the man; but rather confirmed them in the contrary, by ſaying *The Kings of the Gentiles exerciſe Authority over them, but it ſhould not be ſo among them.*

And again, it is as ſtrange and unreaſonable, that St. *Paul* ſhould ſo far forget both St. *Peter*, and himſelf, as in mentioning ſo often St. *Peter*, he ſhould ſtill do it without aſcribing him any title of honour: Nor does it ſtand with reaſon, that St. *Paul* ſpeaking of

of the ſeveral degrees of men in the *Church*, ſhould omit giving St. *Peter* the higheſt, if it had been his due, but place him in the ſame rank and Equipage with the reſt of the *Apoſtles:* for St. *Paul* ſayes *God hath appointed* (not firſt St. *Peter*, then the reſt of the Apoſtles) but *firſt Apoſtles*, *ſecondly Prophets*; now certainly if *Apoſtles* were all firſt, that is, all equal, how could one be in greater power than the other?

But beſides all this, though we ſhould grant againſt all theſe probabilities, and many more, that *Optatus* Biſhop of *Rome* meant that St. *Peter* was head of the *Apoſtles*; yet ſure the Papiſts are ſtill very far from

from proving, the Bishop of *Rome* was to be so at all, much less by Divine right, Successor to St. *Peter* in his headship and Authority. For what incongruity is there, if we say that *Optatus* might succeed St. *Peter* as his heir and Successor, in that part of his Government of that particular *Church* of *Rome*; (as sure he did even whilst St. *Peter* was living) and yet that neither he, nor any man was to succeed him in his Apostleship, nor in the Government of the Church Universal? as though a Bishop should leave his Son heir to all he dyed possessed of; I hope you will not conclude, therefore he must necessarily succeed him in the Bishoprick he dyed

dyed ſeized of. The *Apoſtles* were men all called, and Divinely inſpired by the *Holy Ghoſt*; which was the immediate gift of *God*, and therefore could not be left as a Legacy by man; for though it be in any mans power to leave his Eſtate, yet 'tis in no mans power to leave to his Son his acquir'd parts at his death. 'Tis further worth your obſerving, and ſpecial notice, that St. *Peter* himſelf and the reſt of the *Apoſtles*, by laying the Foundation of the *Church*, were to be themſelves the Foundation of it; and are accordingly ſo called in *Scripture*. And therefore as in a building 'tis incongruous that foundations ſhould ſucceed foundations, ſo it may

may be in the *Church*, that Apoſtles ſhould ſucceed *Apoſtles*, the Church being built upon *Apoſtles* and *Prophets*.

Nor indeed does the grand argument of the Papiſts for their Pope, extend any further in reallity then to the particular *See* of *Rome*: for thus goes their main argument. St. *Peter* was firſt Biſhop of *Rome*, and the *Apoſtles* did not then attribute to themſelves each one his particular *Chair* (underſtand in that City of *Rome*, for in other places, others had *Chairs* beſides St. *Peter*) and therefore ſayes the Papiſts he is a Schiſmatick who againſt that one ſingle *Chair* erects another; (underſtand ſtill in the ſame place) and this is the ground

ground and the Authority the Papiſts ſay the Pope has to be Succeſſor to St. *Peter*, and to exerciſe Authority over the Univerſal *Church*.

But ſure the Proteſtants urge more rationally, in arguing thus: That St. *Peter* wrote *Two Catholick Epiſtles*, in which he mentions his own departure; and writes to preſerve the *Chriſtians* in the *Faith*: but yet in neither of theſe *Two Epiſtles* does he commend the *Chriſtians* to the guidance and authority of his pretended *Succeſſor* the Biſhop of *Rome*; which ſure if St. *Peter* had intended, he would never have forgot to have named it.

And ſince the Papiſts ſo re-

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verence and adore the Popes power, let us Proteſtants alſo admire his way and means of attaining this power: for though the Papiſts ſay, that aſſoon as he is made Pope, he has his authority immediately from *Chriſt*; yet at the very ſame time the Papiſts all know, that he cannot be made Pope, but by Authority and Election of the *Cardinals*; ſo that I am ſure by the very ſame reaſon, any man that is choſen a Magiſtrate in any Town under the Pope's Territories, may claim his Authority as immediately received from *Chriſt*, as well as the Pope. And further, that the proving his being made Pope, does not render him infallible, I could give a hundred in-

inſtances out of the Hiſtory of *Popes*, but that will not ſuit well with my deſigned brevity; but let's aſk the Papiſts, if *Liberius* Biſhop of *Rome*, after Two years Baniſhment, did not by the ſollicitation of *Fortunatianus* Biſhop of *Aquileia*, ſubſcribe to Hereſie, and conſequently could not be infallible. And though the Papiſts rely ſo much on the Authority of the Fathers, to ſupport and juſtifie the Infallibility of their *Church*; yet upon true Examination we ſhall find, they make no more for their Univerſal Biſhop, than St. *Peter's Two Catholick Epiſtles* do.

And for their arguing out of St. *Cyprian's* 55 *Epiſtles*, that ſure makes rather againſt, than

for

for them; for there St. *Cyprian* writes to *Cornelius* Bishop of *Rome*, but writes not so much to him, as of himself, who was Bishop of *Carthage*, against whom a Faction of Schismaticks had set up another Bishop. Now though the Papists say reasonably, that 'tis a mark of the Universal Bishop, that other Bishops should make their Addresses unto the Bishop of *Rome*; yet sure 'twere better Reasoning to conclude thus: If the Bishop of *Rome* had been acknowledged Universal Bishop, and his Authority and Supremacy had been believ'd and own'd, sure St. *Cyprian* had not been satisfied with onely barely writing him his sad story, (for he did no more

more,) but doubtleſs would have made his complaint to him, and deſired and expected redreſs from him, as Univerſal Biſhop over the whole *Catholick Church*; but his not doing ſo, argued he eſteemed him Biſhop onely of one *Church*.

And further, St. *Cyprian*, all know, did reſolutely oppoſe a Decree of the *Roman Biſhop*, and all that adhered to him in that one point of *Rebaptizing*; which the Popiſh Church at that time delivered as a neceſſary Tradition, and Excommunicated the Biſhops of *Cappadocia*, *Galatia*, and all that were againſt that Tradition, and would not ſo much as allow them lodging or enter-

tertainment in *Rome*.

Now ſince the Papiſts affirm, that not to rebaptize thoſe, whom Hereticks had Baptized, to be a damnable Hereſie; 'Tis well worth aſking the Papiſts, when this begun to be ſo? for if they ſay, from the beginning it was ſo, then they muſt maintain a contradiction; for then was St. *Cyprian* a Profeſſor of damnable Hereſie; and yet the Papiſts eſteem him a Saint and Martyr.

And on the other ſide, if 'twere not ſo from the beginning, then did the Pope wrongfully Excommunicate thoſe other *Churches* of *Cappadocia* and *Galatia*, without ſufficient ground of Excommunication and ſeparation, which by their own

own Tenents is Schiſmatical: ſo let them chuſe which ſide they pleaſe, the Pope was in an errour.

And though *Victor Biſhop* of *Rome* obtruded the *Roman* Tradition touching the time of *Eaſter* upon the *Aſian Biſhops*, under the pain of Excommunication and Damnation; yet we read that *Irenæus*, and all the other Weſtern Biſhops, though they did agree with the Biſhop of *Rome* in his obſervation of *Eaſter*, yet they did ſharply reprehend his Excommunicating the *Aſian* Biſhops for their diſagreeing with him; which moſt plainly argues, that the Weſtern Biſhops thought that not a ſufficient ground of Excommunication,

cation, which the Biſhop of *Rome* did; and therefore it muſt neceſſarily follow, they did not eſteem the *Roman* Biſhop infallible, nor the ſeparation from the *Church* of *Rome* an Hereſie. And this I am ſure is true and undeniable reaſon.

The Popiſh Story tells us, That *Optatus* Biſhop of *Rome* upbraided the *Donatiſts* as Schiſmaticks, becauſe they held no Communion with the Church of *Rome*, by adding afterwards that they were Schiſmaticks, for they held no Communion with the ſeven Churches of *Aſia*; which occaſions this Queſtion of the Papiſts, Whether a ſeparation from theſe ſeven *Apoſtolick Churches*,

Churches, was a mark of Hereſie, or not? If they ſay it was not, how comes it that the Pope's Authority is a ſtronger Argument for the Popiſh Church, than the *Aſian* Authority for the *Aſian* Churches? And if the Papiſts ſay, a ſeparation from thoſe ſeven *Aſian* Churches was a mark of Hereſie, then they muſt confeſs their Church was for many years Heretical, as ſeparating many years from the *Aſian* Churches.

And *Polycrates* Biſhop of *Epheſus*, and *Metropolitan* of *Aſia*, deſpiſed the Popes Univerſal Supremacy and Authority, and kept contrary to the Pope *Eaſter-day* the Fourteenth of *March*.

And

And indeed though the Papists do so much quote the authority of the Fathers, yet I find they as little befriend their *Churches* Infallibility, as the *Asian* Bishops themselves have done: for though the Papists say St. *Hierome* conceived it necessary to conform in matters of Faith, to the *Church* of *Rome*; yet before the Papists brag of that, let them answer us this, How came it then to pass, that St. *Hierome* chose to believe the *Epistle* to the *Hebrews Canonical* upon the authority of the Eastern *Church*, and to reject it from the *Canon* of the *Roman Churches* Authority? And how comes it also that he dissented from the *Roman Church* touching the *Canon*

non of the old Teſtament? Let the Papiſts take heed of loſing their Fort, by endeavouring to maintain their out-works.

And now to conclude this point, and excuſe the Papiſts miſtake concerning their univerſal Biſhop, we read in Scripture of the Prophet *Elias*, who thought there was none left beſide himſelf in the whole Kingdome of *Iſrael*, who had not revolted from God; and yet God himſelf is pleaſed to aſſure us he was deceived. And if a Prophet, and one of the greateſt, err'd in his judgment touching his own time and Country; why may not the Papiſts (ſubject to the ſame paſſions) erre in their opinion and judgment about

the Popes being universal Bishop, when plain reason tells them, as well as us, that there were other Bishops as much Universal as the Pope.

I now come to examine this infallible Pope, whether he cannot make his infallible Church more infallible than he has made himself; and free the Popish Church from error, though he could not the Pope from Heresie.

Now towards the disproving the pretended Infalibility of the *Roman* Church, I lay this as the foundation of my discourse; That the whole *Roman* Church can be no better than a Congregation of men, whereof every particular, not one excepted, and consequently the

the generality, is nothing but a collection of men: and if every one be polluted, (*as who dare say he is free from sin?*) how can the whole but be defiled with error? As reasonably may a man brag he is in perfect health and strength, and yet at the same time confess he hath not one sound part about him. And truly it very much creates my wonder, but does not in the least satisfie my reason, what the Papists can pretend by the Infallibility of their *Church*: for if they will allow their Pope to be no better than St. *Peter* was, their Church to be composed of no better men than the *Holy Apostles* were; I shall desire no more, and I am sure they can

never prove so much: for they that pretend to it, declare as great an *ignorance*, as St. *Peter* did *a sin*, in denying his Lord and Master: and there are many other known circumstances, which made St. *Paul* prove him blame-worthy to his face.

And for the *Apostles* being in error, we have not onely the examples of the *Apostles* themselves, who in the time of our *Saviours* Passion, being scandalized, lost their faith in him; and I believe the Papists will not say they could lose their faith in our blessed *Saviour Christ* without error: and therefore our Saviour after his Resurrection upbraided them with their incredulity, and called

called *Thomas* incredulous for denying the Reſurrection, in the Twentieth of St. *John*.

And further, 'tis moſt apparent that the very *Apoſtles* themſelves, even after the ſending the *Holy Ghoſt*, did through inadvertency, or prejudice, continue ſome time in an error, contrary to a revealed truth. And if the Papiſts will not own to know this truth, they may be fully ſatisfied of it in the ſtory of the *Acts* of the *Apoſtles*, where they may plainly read, that notwithſtanding our *Saviours* expreſs warrant and injunction to the *Apoſtles to go and preach to all Nations*; Yet notwithſtanding, till St. *Peter* was better informed by a viſion from Hea-

ven, and by the converſion of *Cornelius*, both St. *Peter* and the reſt of the *Church* held it unlawful for them to go and Preach the Goſpel to any but the *Jewes*. Now ſince we can prove that St. *Peter* did erre, and that the Church compoſed partly of the *Holy Apoſtles* themſelves, who were bleſſed with, and inſpired by the *Holy Ghoſt*, could miſtake, and that *there is no man free from ſin*; and yet that the Body of men that make up the Popiſh *Church* ſhould be infallible, is I confeſs beſide my Faith to believe, or reaſon to comprehend.

For ſure if the *Roman* Church had been eſteem'd by the *Apoſtles* infallible, what needed

needed the *Apostles* any other Creed, than this short Creed; *I believe the Roman Church infallible?* and that would have been more effectual to keep the believers of it from Heresie, and in the true Faith, than this Apostolical Creed we now have.

And sure the Papists cannot but believe with us, that those holy men that wrote the New Testament, were not onely good men, but also men that were desirous to direct us in the plainest and surest way to Heaven. And the Papists cannot also but believe with us, that they were likewise men very sufficiently instructed by the Spirit of God, in all the necessary points of the Chri-

ſtian Faith: Therefore certainly 'tis moſt rational to believe, they could not be ignorant of this *unum neceſſarium*, that all Faith is no Faith, except we believe the Church of *Rome* was deſign'd by God to be the Guide of Faith, as the Church of *Rome* believes, and would have us believe ſo too.

We alſo further believe, and that with great reaſon too, that the Writers of the New Teſtament were wiſe men, eſpecially being they were aſſiſted by the Spirit of wiſdom; and ſuch that muſt know, that an uncertain Guide was as bad as none at all; and yet after all this, is it poſſible for a Philoſophical or contemplative man, nay, for

for any man that has reaſon or common ſenſe, after all theſe ſuppoſitions, to believe that none among theſe holy Writers of the New Teſtament ſhould remember (*ad rei memoriam*) to ſet down plainly this moſt neceſſary Doctrine, not ſo much as once, That we were to believe the *Roman* Church infallible?

Again, that none of the *Evangeliſts* ſhould ſo much as once name this Popiſh neceſſary point of Faith, if they had eſteem'd it neceſſary for us to believe it, when St. *Paul* ſayes, *He kept not back any thing that was profitable for us*; and ſure the Papiſts cannot deny, but what is neceſſary to ſalvation, muſt be very profitable:

And St. *Luke* also plainly tells Christians, his intent was *to write all things necessary*. And sure it stands also with reason, that when St. *Paul* wrote to the *Romans*, he would have congratulated this their extraordinary priviledge, if he had believ'd it belong'd to them.

And though the *Romans* bring it as a great Argument for them, that St. *Paul* tells them, *Their Faith is spoken all the world over*; Yet pray let them moderate those thoughts with this consideration, that St. *Paul* said the very same thing to the *Thessalonians*: and let them further consider this, that if the *Roman* Faith had been the Rule of Faith for all the

the world for ever, as the Papists hold; sure St. *Paul* would have forborn to put the *Romans* in fear of a possibility (for though Raillery is much in fashion now, sure 'twas not then) that they also, nay the whole Church of the Gentiles, if they did not look to their standing, might fall into infidelity, as the *Jews* had done, 1 *Eph.* 11.

And methinks it also stands with great reason, that the *Apostles* writing so often of Hereticks, & Antichrist, should have given the Christian world this (as Papists pretend) onely sure Preservative from them, to be guided by the infallible Church of *Rome*; and not to separate from it, upon the pain of damnation. Me-

Methinks alſo St. *Peter*, St. *James*, and St. *Jude*, in their Catholick *Epiſtles*, would not have forgot giving Chriſtians this Catholick Direction of following the *Roman* Church; and St. *John* inſtead of ſaying, *He that believes that Jeſus is the Chriſt, is born of God*, might have ſaid, He that adheres to the Doctrine of the *Roman* Church, and lives according to it, is a good Chriſtian, and by this mark you ſhall know him. In a word, can there be any thing more irrational, than to believe, that none of theſe holy men, who were ſo deſirous of mens ſalvation, ſhould ſo much as once remember to write, that we were to obey the *Roman* Church,

Church, but leave it to be collected from uncertain principles, and by more uncertain conſequences?

So that upon the whole, I cannot without much wonder look on the Pope's confidence, and the Papiſts credulity, in eſteeming the Pope or his Councils to be an infallible Guide: ſure either they never read what they ought to believe, or elſe they will not believe what they read, though it be never ſo known a Truth, and worthy of belief: for if they did, they could never believe the Infallibility of the Popiſh Church. For indeed, if they would read the Popiſh ſtory, or, as I may well call it, the Civil Wars of the Popes, you

you ſhall find, as I ſaid before, Popes againſt Popes, Councils againſt Councils; ſome Fathers againſt others, nay, ſome againſt themſelves; new Traditions brought in, and old ones turn'd out; one Church againſt another; nay, the Church of one Age againſt the Church of another. In a word, the Papiſts ſay their Church is infallible; and all other Chriſtians beſides themſelves, though more in number than they, abſolutely deny it; and yet we muſt for all that believe the Popiſh Church infallible.

And to ſpeak the plain Truth, and in a word to unravel the real cauſe of the Grandeur of the Church of

Rome,

Rome above all other Churches, is onely this: *Rome* was the Imperial Town of the Empire, and its Greatneſs was given by men, and not God; and when afterwards *Conſtantinople* was the Imperial City, they Decreed that the Church of *Conſtantinople* ſhould have equal Priviledges and Dignities with that of *Rome*.

And now to end this Diſcourſe, I deſire you will pleaſe to conſider this Concluſion, which is, that after all that the Papiſts have ſaid, be it never ſo much and mighty, to ſhew the Infallibility of their Church; I am verily perſwaded they cannot ſhew more, if ſo much, out of the Scriptures, for their Church,

Church, as the ſmalleſt ſociety of Chriſtians met together in prayer, can for themſelves, *that when two or three are met together in my name, I will be amongſt them, ſayes the Lord.* And now I have juſt done this ſmall diſcourſe, and the Sun is juſt upon finiſhing this dayes viſit; I can very readily follow that holy advice of not *letting it go down in my anger:* (which I thank God I have to none living) and therefore am in ſo much *Charity* with the Papiſts, as to wiſh that neither they, nor Proteſtants, might waſt their pretious time in meer ſpeculative controverſies about words and ceremonies, which of themſelves will never carry us to Heaven; but

but that we may ſpend our time like wiſe Chriſtians in the wayes and fear of God, which is the onely beginning of wiſdom; and not conſume it in ſtudying and maintaining of Diſputes and Factions; but if we muſt ſtill differ, let Proteſtants and Papiſts differ in opinions but as *Ariſtotle* and *Cicero* did, who, though they were of differing Judgements touching the natures of *Souls*, yet both of them agreed in the main, that all men had *Souls*, and ſouls of the ſame nature.

And as Phyſitians though they diſpute whether the Brain or the Heart be the principal part of man, yet that all men have Brains, and Heart, they

ſufficiently agree in: So though Proteſtants eſteem one part of the Church-doctrine, and Papiſts ſet a higher value on another part, yet the Soul of the Church may be in both of them; and though the Papiſts account that a neceſſary truth, which the Proteſtants account neither neceſſary, nor perhaps true; yet in truth truly neceſſary they both agree, *viz.* The Apoſtles Creed, and that Faith, Hope, and Charity, are neceſſary to ſalvation. And laſtly, though Papiſts hold they may be juſtified by their works, and Proteſtants hold none can be juſtified barely by them, (in regard of the imperfections of their works) yet on the other ſide, we

ſo

ſo much agree with the Papiſts, as to eſteem none can be juſtified without them: for without Repentance, and *Charity*, none can be good; they being both like Health to our bodies, the want of which is ſufficient to diſturb all other pleaſures. Therefore when we read St. *Pauls Treatiſe of Juſtification by Faith without the works of the Law*; let us at the ſame time read what he writes to the *Corinthians* concerning the abſolute neceſſity of that Excellent vertue of *Charity*, and they will reconcile one another. And I wiſh, *that we were all ſo reconciled in the unity of the Spirit, and in the bond of peace.* And that you

you *Madam* may be the sooner reconcil'd to me, for this tediousness; I shall now make a Conclusion, which after such an overgrown Letter, must needs be the best Complement that can be made by,

Madam,

Yours, *&c.*

London the 24 *of* Feb. 1673.

FINIS.

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